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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000557

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/C AND S/USSES  
LONDON FOR POL - LORD  
PARIS FOR POL - BAIN AND KANEDA  
ADDIS ABABA FOR AU

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CORRUPTION SCANDAL WIDENS BUT DEBY SPARES POWERFUL  
INFRASTRUCTURE MINISTER

REFTEL: NDJAMENA 431

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) A corruption scandal involving officials of the ministries of Education and Health has widened, implicating seven additional ministers and deputy ministers. Six of the seven were ordered to provide testimony while President Deby spared the seventh: powerful Infrastructure Minister Younoumsi. Separately, the majority of Chad's attorneys went on a two-day strike protesting alleged government interference with the case; the strike is now over and official testimony continues. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, the limits of the government's ability to investigate itself appear to have been reached. END SUMMARY.

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SCANDAL IMPLICATES MORE GOC OFFICIALS  
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¶2. (SBU) The corruption scandal involving officials from the ministries of Education and Finance (reftel) has continued to bubble along in recent weeks. Police officials conducting the investigation into embezzled funds -- allegedly used to buy nonexistent school supplies -- raided the offices of the printer involved in the scandal and discovered computer files implicating additional government officials. The discovery led to the arrest of Haroun Kabadi, Secretary General of the Presidency, and Hassanty Oumar, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture. Kabadi, an Embassy interlocutor, was also the acting Secretary General of the ruling party at the time of his arrest, which sent shock waves through the Chadian and international communities.

¶3. (SBU) The computer files reportedly contained the names of seven cabinet officials, six of whom President Deby instructed to provide testimony to the judge overseeing the case. The officials included the Ministers of Finance, Education, Health and Deputy Ministers of Finance, Education, Agriculture and the Secretary General of the Government.

¶4. (SBU) The seventh named senior government official found on the printer's files was powerful government purse-string-holder Infrastructure Minister Adoum Younoumsi. President Deby, through the Cabinet of Ministers, has decided that Younoumsi should not testify, with the GOC spokesman declaring that, "the ministers did not see any link" between this case and the activities of the Minister of Infrastructure. Further, the editor of independent weekly "Our Times" was arrested for defamation of character for

printing Younousmi's name, along with those of the six other government officials, when reporting on the corruption story.

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LAWYERS ALLEGE GOC INTERFERENCE  
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¶5. (SBU) Meanwhile, the majority of Chad's attorneys went on a two-day strike in mid-November to protest what they termed "executive branch interference" with the judicial process. The attorneys announced that they believed the appeals judge was tampering with the case by modifying the charging orders of the lower court. The appeals judge claimed his decisions were necessary to account for a conflict of interest between a lower court judge and one of the defendants. The attorneys have now resumed work -- after carving out a long weekend for themselves -- without getting the decisions of the appeals judge reversed. Testimony of the GOC officials was rescheduled for after the strike ended.

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COMMENT  
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¶6. (SBU) Chadian citizens have been cautiously upbeat about recent investigations into government corruption, but with Deby having exempted Younousmi from scrutiny, the limits of the ability of the government to police itself have been reached. Citizens may feel some satisfaction that certain officials are being prosecuted, but they are likely to conclude that Younousmi - not by any means seen as innocent - is simply too big a fish to fry in the environment of cronyism that prevails in Chad. END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) Minimize considered.

NDJAMENA 00000557 002 OF 002

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